

Appl. No.: 10/616,429
Amdt. dated September 2, 2005
Reply to Office Action of June 6, 2005

REMARKS

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, applicants respectfully submit that all the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-62 were pending, with claims 1-12, 17-41, and 49-62 withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1-41, 47, and 49-62 are canceled herein. Claims 42 and 48 are amended. Claims 63-69 are added. Claims 42-46, 48, and 63-69 are therefore now pending.

Independent claim 42 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of canceled claim 47. The claim scope is unchanged relative to the canceled claim.

Claim 48 has been amended into independent form. The claim scope is unchanged by this amendment.

Rejections Under 35 USC §§ 102, 103

Claims 13-16 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,304,086 ("Minerbo"). Claims 42-46 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Minerbo in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,241,273 ("Luling"). To expedite prosecution, claims 13-16 have been canceled, and independent claim 42 has been amended to incorporate subject matter from claim 47 that the examiner indicated to be allowable. For at least this reason, independent claim 42 and its dependent claims 43-46 are allowable over the cited art.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 47-48 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but were indicated to be otherwise allowable. Applicants have accordingly amended independent claim 42 to incorporate the limitations of canceled claim 47, and have amended claim 48 into independent form. Claim 48 is now in allowable form.

Applicants note that the examiner has focused on a particular limitation when indicating allowability, but believe that the examiner intended that the claims be allowed based on the claim scope as a whole, considering all of the claim limitations.

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New Claims

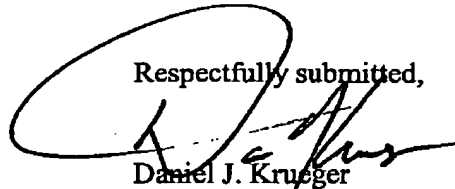
Added claim 63 includes language from original claims 47-48, and in many ways, it parallels the language of independent claim 42, though most of the unnecessary verbiage and some of the unnecessarily limiting language has been eliminated. Applicant submit that independent claim 63 and its dependent claims 64-69 are allowable for at least the same reasons as original claims 47-48.

Conclusion

In the course of the foregoing discussions, applicants may have at times referred to claim limitations in shorthand fashion, or may have focused on a particular claim element. This discussion should not be interpreted to mean that the other limitations can be ignored or dismissed. The claims must be viewed as a whole, and each limitation of the claims must be considered when determining the patentability of the claims. Moreover, it should be understood that there may be other distinctions between the claims and the prior art which have yet to be raised, but which may be raised in the future.

If any fees are inadvertently omitted or if any additional fees are required or have been overpaid, please appropriately charge or credit those fees to Conley Rose, P.C. Deposit Account Number 03-2769/1391-62311/HDJK.

Respectfully submitted,



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